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The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 51/27 and 51/28 of 4 December 1996. The Assembly, in its resolution 51/27, which deals with the transfer by some States of their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem in violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, called once more upon those States to abide by the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions. In resolution 51/28, which deals with Israeli policies in the Syrian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, the Assembly demanded once more that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

2. The Secretary-General, in order to fulfil his reporting responsibility under the above-mentioned resolutions, on 9 September 1997 addressed notes verbales to the Permanent Representative of Israel and to the Permanent Representatives of the other Member States and requested them to inform him of any steps their Governments had taken or envisaged taking concerning implementation of the relevant provisions of those resolutions. As at 15 October 1997, six replies have been received, from Bangladesh, Colombia, Finland, Guyana, Japan and the Russian Federation. Those replies are reproduced in section II of the present report.

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II. Replies from Member States

Bangladesh

[Original: English]

1. Bangladesh strongly condemns the continued construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories with a view to changing their demographic and legal character. Bangladesh has condemned the recent circulation of blasphemous posters by Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

2. The Bangladesh Parliament has unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the incident and extending support to the Palestinian cause.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]

The Government of Colombia supports the spirit of resolutions 51/27 and 51/28 of 4 December 1996 and has therefore not taken and does not intend to take any measures that would violate the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

Finland

[Original: English]

1. Together with the other European Union countries, the actions of Finland on Middle East issues aim at reviving and strengthening the Middle East peace process.

2. Financial contributions as part of Finnish development assistance for the Middle East are allocated toward supporting the peace process.

3. Bilateral assistance allocated to the Palestinian Authority concentrates on education, housing and sanitation. These projects are complemented by projects of Finnish and Palestinian non-governmental organizations. The aim of these projects is to promote good governance, democracy and human rights, for example, through Finnish-Palestinian research now in preparation.

4. The bilateral assistance allocated to Egypt includes an environmental component, water and sanitation projects, agricultural research and quality control of agricultural products, and protection of cultural monuments, as well as rural development projects in general.

5. The total Finnish contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East amounts to 150 million markkaa (the annual contribution in 1996 was Fmk 10 million and in 1997 also Fmk 10 million).

6. Other humanitarian assistance to the Middle East in 1996 was directed towards supporting human rights and democracy and Fmk 200,000 was allocated to the Mandela Institute. In 1997 Finland allocated Fmk 2 million through the International Committee of the Red Cross to the West Bank and Gaza.

Guyana

[Original: English]

1. The Government of Guyana has complied with the relevant provisions of resolutions 51/27 and 51/28 adopted by the General Assembly on 4 December 1996, under the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East".

2. The Government of Guyana does not recognize the "Basic Law" on Jerusalem promulgated by Israel, the occupying Power, or its proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Guyana has also abided by the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations as called for in the said resolutions.

Japan

[Original: English]

1. With respect to General Assembly resolution 51/27, Japan has acted in accordance with Security Council resolution 478 (1980); its diplomatic delegation is based in Tel Aviv.

2. With respect to General Assembly resolution 51/28, Japan supports Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Japan hopes that the outstanding issues will be resolved peacefully through talks between the parties concerned. From this standpoint Japan contributes troops to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force with a view to supporting the efforts of the United Nations in this regard.

Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]

1. With regard to the implementation of resolution 51/27, entitled "Jerusalem", the Russian Federation, as a sponsor of the Middle East peace process, is continuing to work actively with both sides with a view to the resumption of negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories, during which a solution to the problem of Jerusalem should be found. The Russian Federation supported the convening of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly and voted in favour of resolution ES-10/2, adopted at that session, which reflected the deep concern of the international community at the critical situation resulting from Israeli settlement activities in East Jerusalem (Har Homa).

2. With regard to resolution 51/28, entitled "The Syrian Golan", the Russian Federation, as a sponsor, believes that the question of the Golan should be resolved in direct negotiations between the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace set forth therein. Accordingly, the Russian Federation will continue to work towards the earliest possible resumption of constructive dialogue between the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel.